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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT
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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

(Release on receipt)

SUBJECT: "Mind Your Motions"- information from the Office of Experiment Stations, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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Our clean-up note for the day is how you can save time and energy when you wash woodwork.

Home economists of the Michigan State Experiment Station tell us an experienced homemaker can wash woodwork in a third less time than it takes a beginner.

They found this to be true when they made a time-motion study of common household tasks.

In this study...they observed 25 women as they worked in their accustomed way in their own homes. They made detailed lists of the methods these women used.

Then to find how much time a homemaker could gain if she followed the best practices...the home economists made two films of a laboratory worker washing woodwork. In the first...she used the average methods of doing the task. In the second...she practiced the best methods that one or more of the 25 homemakers had used. And the second film showed that she did the work in 10 percent less time. That is...she saved six minutes on an hour's cleaning.

Now it may not seem very important to save six minutes. But if you could save six minutes on each hour of the working day...you would gain three-quarters of an hour a day to enjoy some form of relaxation or to find time to do some of the things you plan but never have the spare time to do.

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And just in case you'd like to check your own practices with these recommended by the experts....here are the time saving practices that make a difference.

First--having the pail where you can reach it handily. If you're washing baseboards...you'll set the pail on the floor beside you. But if you're washing doors and walls. ..set the pail on a stool or chair. Then you won't have to bend over every time you wet the wash cloth.

Then watch the stroke. You'll save time and energy if the wash the woodwork with long strokes. For example...if you're washing a door...make a single stroke go clear across the door...then down and back across again.

Something else. Use both hands. Make your left hand work as well as your right. One way you can do this is using your left hand to hold the dry cloth when you need to dry the wet surfaces.

Another suggestion. The Michigan homemakers saved time by using a non-soap cleaning agent rather than soap. The formal name for cleaner of this type is "detergent". The detergent the home economists recommend is a white powder with the imposing chemical name--trisodium phosphate. Your grocer sells this under various brand names. Perhaps you already have a box in your cleaning supplies. You'll find that it speeds up the cleaning and gets rid of the dirt and grease quickly.

So these are the short cuts to keep in mind. Use a detergent instead of soap. Set the pail where you can reach it easily. Take long strokes. And use your left hand as well as your right. In other words...you can save time when you wash woodwork if you'll "mind your motions."

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